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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 1 April 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 1 April 1998 (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 113 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/53/50.

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ANNEX

Statement issued on 1 April 1998 by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia

Following the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution on the arms embargo, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs esteems that such a resolution was unfounded and that it represents a precedent in the sense that an internal question of a Member State of the United Nations has been considered without its consent.

Bearing in mind that in Kosovo and Metohija there are no confrontations, that there is no threat to peace and security, the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs stresses that accordingly there is no basis in the Charter of the United Nations for the consideration of this issue. It recalls that problems in Kosovo and Metohija originate in separatism and terrorism and by no means in the limitation of rights of the members of national minorities.

Thus all the pressures against the Government of Serbia or Yugoslavia are unfounded and unacceptable, since they can only encourage those who have unrealistic and dangerous goals and illusions.

The President of the Republic of Serbia and the Government of Serbia, as the most competent state institutions in the Republic, have demonstrated their constitutional responsibility as well as the maximum readiness for all issues in Kosovo and Metohija to be resolved through a direct dialogue without preconditions, in the interest of equality and the well-being of all citizens in that part of Serbia.

Such openness and responsible position is most widely supported by all political forces and all citizens of Serbia, including the members of national minorities, who see their safe future only in a stable and prosperous Serbia and Yugoslavia, as an equal member of the international community. Separatism and, particularly, terrorism are most widely condemned within our country as well as in the world, as dangers threatening not only the interests of a particular State, but also the very foundations and principles of international relations. Therefore, the suppression of terrorism is not only a legitimate right but also an obligation of each State. This right and obligation must not be jeopardized in any way.

All the issues in Kosovo and Metohija may be resolved only through dialogue and by political means, with full respect for European standards with regard to the rights of the members of national minorities, including genuine local self-administration. The Government of Serbia strongly committed itself to such a policy in its last statement of 31 March 1998 (A/53/92-S/1998/289, annex), and this policy deserves clear and unambiguous support by the international community. Pressures, outside interference and internationalization not only have no grounds, but they are also counter-productive and damaging. They can only fuel separatist aspirations and plans, which contradict the generally accepted principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the Final Act of

the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and constitute a threat to peace and stability in the region.

The readiness of Yugoslavia to cooperate with the international community on questions such as the strengthening of peace, stability and good-neighbourliness in the region and the achievement of goals of European and other international organizations has never been in doubt, and it is certainly not so today. It is natural that Yugoslavia, in addition, expects that its legitimate interests and rights be respected as those of an active subject and partner in the positive processes in the region and in Europe.

It is therefore more surprising that it is required of Serbia and Yugoslavia to undertake what they are already doing, guided by the equally generally accepted principles and their own objectives. On the other hand, they cannot accept the participation of foreign factors in the resolution of internal matters of importance for the sovereign protection of national and state interests, such as territorial integrity and the constitutional system. Such demands for the involvement of foreign factors in internal affairs contradict the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the interests of the Member States and the international legal order.